

# A Southern Gentleman

A Romantic Comedy  
By  
Clay Clement

1862



CLAY CLEMENT

1884

*TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN PLAYS OF PURITY IN THOUGHT, SENTIMENT AND ACTION—TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT TO BE INTERESTING NEEDS NOT TO BE SALACIOUS; NOR TO BE FUNNY, A PLAY MUST BE SILLY OR VULGAR—THIS LITTLE BROCHURE IS INSCRIBED; AND IN THE SPIRIT OF THE ABOVE,*

JNO. HENRY MARTIN

PRESENTS

MR. CLAY CLEMENT

AUTHOR-ACTOR,

AS

“GEN. JOSEPH CARROLL”

OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

MR. CLEMENT,

SUPPORTED BY A SELECTED COMPANY,

Will Tell

His South Carolina Story,

“A SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN”





The Parting.



THE DUEL.



"Speak freely, my friend."

**MR. GEO. P. GOODALE**, dramatic critic of the "Detroit Free Press," expressed himself as follows anent Clay Clement as actor and playwright.

"Of course Mr. Jefferson's recent visit is not forgotten, and while doing honor to his ever welcome presence, it will not be heresy to compare Mr. Clement's double performance as author and actor to that of the historic nestor of our stage as an entertainment.

"In Mr. Clay Clement the stage has an object of extraordinary interest. He is tragedian, romantic actor, character actor, comedian and playwright, and in these several roles he stands head and shoulders above all who are now in active service, save only the lonely few. The lines of the plays he has written are an intellectual delight. The study of character which these plays disclose shows a nimble and subtle mentality that can hardly be equaled in any modern plays except, possibly, some of the comedies of Bronson Howard. How far-reaching may be the influence of his endeavors is problematical, but in them there is at least a clear note of promise for our stage. Strange things are always happening, and it would not be the strangest thing in the world if we should one day hear this young writer and player named as the founder of a distinct school of plays, and he certainly has shown us that good writing is easily consonant with effective drama."

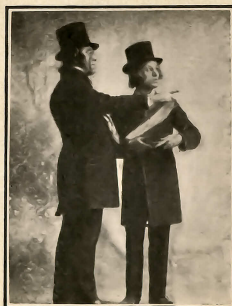




"Hannibal sut'nly is mighty  
suggestive of old times."



"I have written a history of the war, gentlemen."



"Y-e-s, P-a."

A Letter from the HONORABLE J. STERLING MORTON, Ex-Secretary  
of State Agriculture.

Mr. John Henry Martin, Clay Clement's, Manager, is an old resident of Nebraska. His father and Secretary Morton were neighbors and pioneer farmers in the new state for years, and Mr. Morton has known Mr. Martin all his life.

Since Mr. Morton's retirement from public life, he and his sons have built a theatre in their home town, Nebraska City. Last spring Mr. Martin presented Mr. Clement in Mr. Morton's pretty theatre which he has called "The Overland." A few days thereafter, Mr. Martin received a letter, extracts of which are given below.

THE LETTER.

Arbor Lodge, Nebraska City, Neb., April 30th, 1898.

MR. JOHN HENRY MARTIN, Denver, Col.:

My Dear Martin:—Since your visit to the scenes of your childhood and youth a few days ago, I have wondered how you ever came to be so judiciously and successfully connected with the theatrical world, and have come to the conclusion that it is not a matter of chance, and that it could not have been brought about by early environment.

Your evolution from the farm on Walnut Creek, to the successful management of the best character of theatrical entertainments, is a study in mental advancement and development, which presents an original and entertaining problem to the mind of one who has known you from your boyhood. You are to be congratulated, and by no one more sincerely than him who writes now and wishes you continued prosperity and growing fame.

All of our people who saw Mr. Clement, as well as myself, were charmed with the quiet, natural, and artistic refinement of his methods of acting, and also of the other players who assisted him to entertain and instruct us. I have witnessed none in comedy more truthful to nature, more perfectly manlike and human, than was Mr. Clement's impersonation.

Please present my regards to Mr. Clement and the members of his company to whom I had the gratification of being introduced.

With the sincere wish that you, and they, may each and all continue for many years careers full of satisfaction, and terminating in complete success, I remain,

Faithfully your friend,

J. STERLING MORTON.





"Dar's a toddy fur ye, Linda."



"Fishy, fishy, in the brook,  
Come and bite my little hook."

**MR. P. ARONI**, the gifted critic of the Louisville "Courier Journal," who is a son of the South, a native of Alabama, wrote as follows after seeing Mr. Clement's production of "**A SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN**."

"To Clay Clement, actor:—Your 'Southern Gentleman' is the first, the only southern gentleman the American stage has seen portrayed with truth.

"To Clay Clement's public in this city, is due an apology for a rare intrusion of personality, but a lack of ability for flaw-seeking, so soon after heart-strings long silent have been stirred into old, forgotten melody by a southern woman's story of the war's unwritten history; by the dozen lines that for the first time in literature tell in truth what the southern 'Mammy' was to southern childhood; for she was indeed the poem of bygone days in the south. The portrayal for the first time of the southern gentleman as we knew him and as we know him—too rarely now, alas, has left us hardly in a fit condition to write a criticism on Mr. Clement's beautiful play."

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**OPIE READ**, the well-known author and playwright, gives his opinion of "**A SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN**" in the following letter to Mr. Clement.

CHICAGO, August 30, 1896.

My Dear Clement:—

Having witnessed your performance of "A Southern Gentleman," to you I acknowledge my indebtedness for a beautiful and inspiring picture. As long as such artists as yourself portray with so high a degree of faithfulness the sterling characteristics of manhood, the theatrical profession will be upheld with honor and dignity. Such plays as "A Southern Gentleman" are in themselves an education, especially when interpreted with the intelligence, fidelity and discretion that marks your performance. No one has so truthfully caught the spirit of the high born Southerner—no one has so forcefully presented him.

Yours cordially,

OPIE READ.





Arzella Thompson,  
in  
"A Southern Gentleman."



"Yes, Paw."

**MR. CLEMENT'S poetic explanation of the noble selfishness theory of General Joseph Carroll in "A SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN."**

This beautiful speech cannot be better given than to quote from the criticism written by Mr. J. C. Wilcox of the Detroit News-Tribune, who says:

"I may be over enthusiastic, but I feel there is something beyond mere passing success in Clay Clement's achievements as an actor and playwright. He is not cast in the common mold if I correctly estimate him, and I cannot get rid of the idea that he is destined to stand out from most of his contemporaries as a representative of something better than the ordinary.

"Mr. Clement is not less a poet than actor. I thought some of the similes in 'A Southern Gentleman,' very gems of imaginative writing; for example, the speech in which 'General Carroll' explains to Miss Arzelia Thompson, his philosophy of noble selfishness, wherein he says, *'Oh, yes, true selfishness is noble and is nobly rewarded. Whether we know it or not, if we obey the laws we reap the reward; if we violate them we suffer and die. The noblest selfishness is probably noble love, and love of some kind is in everything. The trees love one another. and send perfumed messages on blossom petals. The flower loves his neighbor and has a message to deliver. He knows the bee is selfish and would never carry it without a bribe, so in his bosom he secretes a drop of honey, the bee stops for the bribe, and while he is securing it, to his fuzzy little legs adheres the pollen of the flower. On flies the bee to the garden sweetheart and lo! the message is delivered. The bee has his honey, the two flowers blush and nod in the breeze, and all the while nature chuckles to herself. Her couriers are all faithful because they are all selfish. Why, I believe the stars have sweethearts and send ethereal messages on beams of light that require aeons of years to deliver, nevertheless they arrive and the mighty spheres are thrilled with tenderness.'*"





"General Joseph Carroll"  
of South Carolina.



"Mammy Linda."



"When he went away the first time did he never  
come back, Mammy Linda?"  
"Never, honey - Lam', chile, he never did come back."

**"MADAM STERLING'S HISTORY OF THE WAR."**

In Act I of Clay Clement's "A Southern Gentleman," the following scene occurs between "Madam Uphemia Sterling," "Judge Fluheart," and "General Joseph Carroll," when the subject of the War of the Rebellion twenty-two years before is mentioned.

*Madam Sterling*—"History does not mention the real heroes of the war.

*Judge Fluheart*—"Contemporaneous history, Madam, may not do them justice, but real history will.

*Madam Sterling*—"Real history will never be written. The history that is hidden in the human heart, that perishes without having been voiced—I have written a history of the war, did you know that, gentlemen?

*General Carroll*—"I hope then, we have some real history, madam."

*Madam Sterling*—"It excels in one respect all other histories."

*General Carroll*—"I am not surprised that anything at your hands should be excellent.

*Madam Sterling*—"Brevity is its chief quality. It is in three chapters, and to insure durability I have had it published in marble. I am so fond of my work that I have committed the whole book to memory. You shall hear it gentlemen.

Chapter I—Horace Sterling, my husband, fell at the victory of Ball's Bluff, 1861.

Chapter II—John Henry Thomas, my brother, fell at the taking of the New Orleans, 1862.

Chapter III—(This is the longest chapter gentlemen) Horace, John, Nathaniel, Paul, I gave these four sons for the Confederacy—Gettysburg, 1863. The book is bound in green Cypress, and every student of history is welcome to peruse its pages."

*General Carroll*—"Your work is sublime madam, but the same criticism you have just passed on other histories applies to yours. You have not mentioned the name of the real hero.

*Madam Sterling*, after a moment's hesitation, places her hand in General Carroll's and says: "Joseph, I appreciate your compliment. I have left room for a postscript, you shall write it yourself."





"You and my mother were sweethearts,  
weren't you General?"

"We were children together."

"Why didn't you marry her?"

"For the simple reason that your father,  
a most estimable gentleman, cut me out."



Act III—"A Southern Gentleman."

The Louisville "Courier Journal" said editorially of Clay Clement's play "A SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN."

The failure of the effort of the stage to produce distinctively southern speech, and hence southern atmosphere, has been painfully apparent to all southern people who have heard southern plays interpreted by northern actors. There are perhaps some people in the south who talk as if their mouths were full of hot mush, but that is no reason why the southerner, as a type, should be made to talk thus. It is very evident that the player folk take their models from among themselves, rather than from among the people they essay to represent.

It has been the same way with the dialect of the southern negro as represented by both northern players and writers. Nothing is farther from the truth and more absolutely absurd than their efforts to reproduce the negro dialect. There is no greater abortion on the stage to-day than the stage negro, and there could be no characterization more delightful than a true one of the old time southern "Uncle" and "Aunty." Now and then comes along the thousandth play writer and player who has some real appreciation of southern atmosphere, southern character and southern dialect. As the Courier Journal has said in its dramatic columns, there is such a play and such players now at Macaulay's. Mr. Clement in his play "A Southern Gentleman" shows plainly that he has not taken his southern characters nor his southern negroes from the northern dialect dishers or from the minstrel stage. His characters are real people of the south and "Hannibal" and "Mammy Lindy" are true types of the old time house servants of the south whom every true southerner knows and loves. They are not perfect yet, but they are so good and so much better than those seen before that it is a pleasure for the Courier Journal to commend them.





"I'm beginning to be afraid of you!"



Judge Fluhearty.

While you may not believe his theological theories, you may be willing to grant his ability to recognize true art, especially that art which by expression, word and action conveys to the mind true impressions.

This is what

*COL. ROBERT G. INGERSOLL,*  
(CRITIC,)

said of

*MR. CLAY CLEMENT,*  
(ACTOR.)

"You are a natural Actor. You have the Divine spark—the touch of nature—the poetic and pathetic intuition that cannot be acquired. I congratulate you. You stand on the threshold of a great career."

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OPERA HOUSE, TERRE HAUTE,  
... SATURDAY, FEB. 4